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Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A method for introducing and stabilizing heterologous and recombinant genes in a thermophilic host comprising the steps of:

~~one of~~ inactivating ~~and~~ or deleting a characteristic gene defining a ~~detectable~~ host ~~characteristic growth rate~~ from said thermophilic host, resulting in a modified thermophilic host ~~expressing an absence of said detectable host characteristic~~ having a reduced growth rate; and

inserting a DNA fragment of interest into said modified thermophilic host together with an intact said characteristic gene, whereby ~~said detectable host characteristic~~ host growth rate defined by said characteristic gene is restored to said thermophilic host thereby enabling ~~one of~~ detection ~~and~~ or confirmation of successful transformation using plasmid vectors ~~and~~ or integration of said DNA fragment into a chromosome of said thermophilic host.

2. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said characteristic gene is a malate dehydrogenase gene.

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3. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said thermophilic host is a *Thermus* sp.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 1, wherein said thermophilic host is *Thermus thermophilus*.

Claims 6-9 (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) In a *Thermus* strain comprising ~~one of an~~ inactivated ~~and or~~ deleted characteristic gene defining a ~~detectable host characteristic~~ strain growth rate, a method for producing biotechnology products comprising the steps of:

~~transforming said *Thermus* strain with~~ cloning a gene of interest into at least one convenient multiple cloning site of a plasmid or integration vector comprising an intact said characteristic gene, ~~said plasmid or integration vector~~ comprising at least one ~~strong~~ *Thermus* promoter and said at least one convenient multiple cloning site, ~~whereby expression of any gene of interest is enabled;~~

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~~cloning a gene of interest into said at least one multiple cloning site~~
transforming said *Thermus* strain with said plasmid or integration vector; and
expressing said gene of interest in said *Thermus* strain using said strong
Thermus promoter.

11. (Original) A method in accordance with Claim 10, wherein said
characteristic gene is a malate dehydrogenase gene.

Claims 12-14 (Canceled)